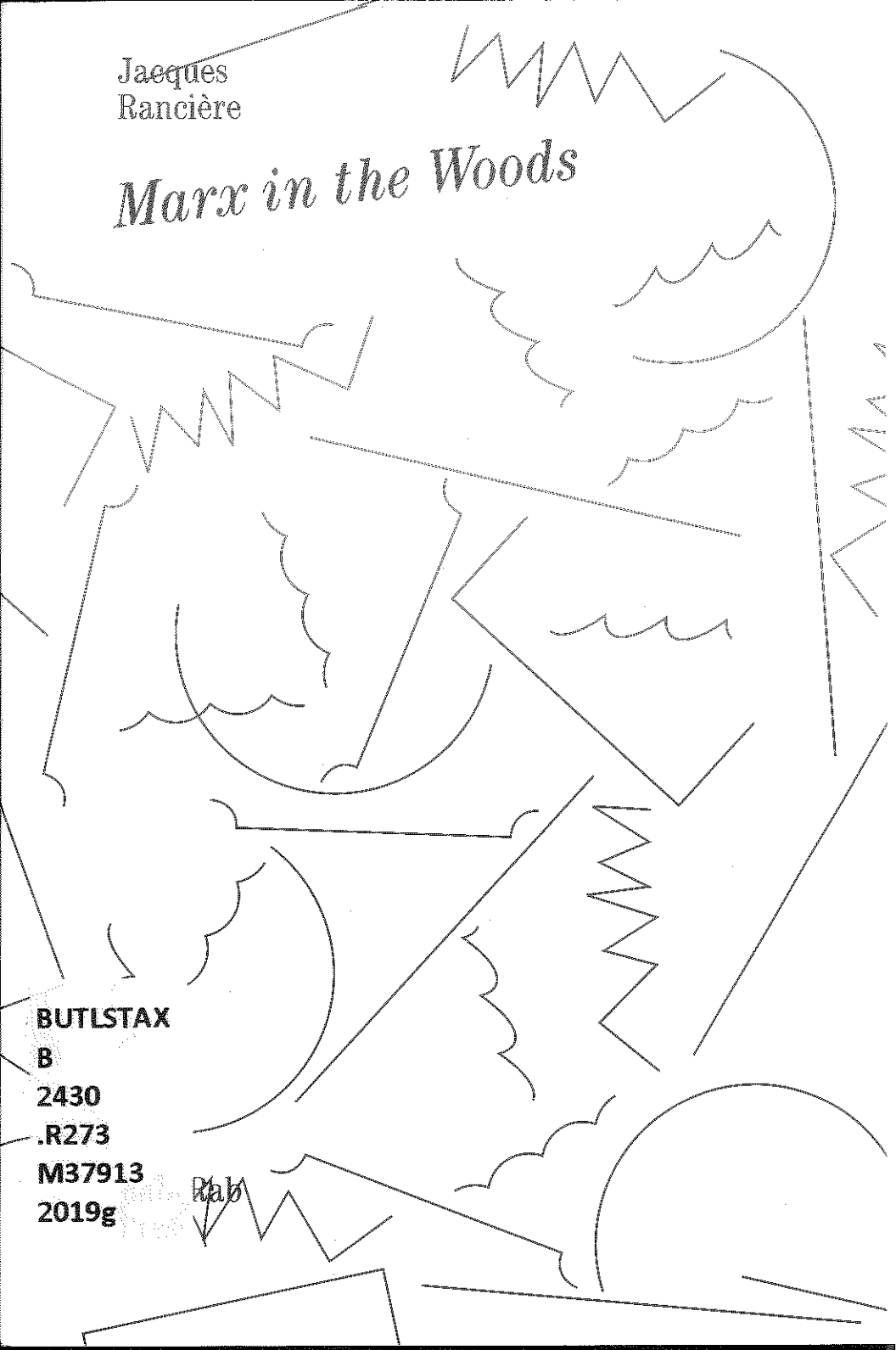
Jaeques
Rancière

Marx in the Woods



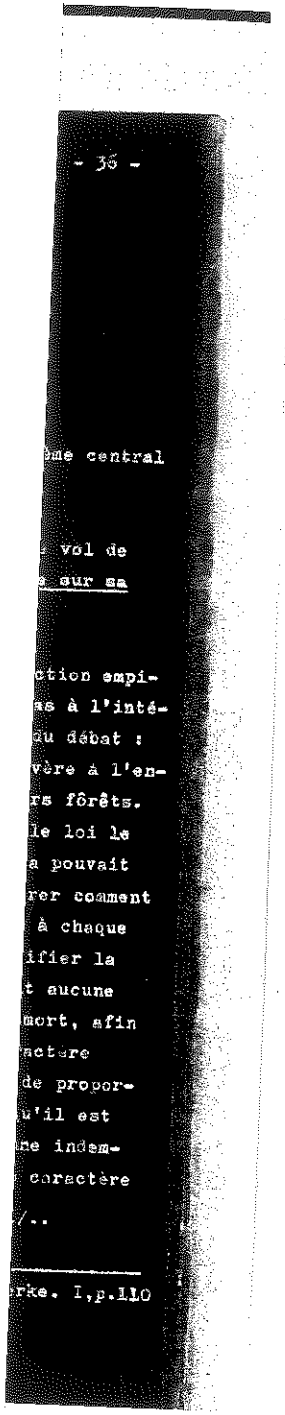
BUTLSTAX
B
2430
.R273
M37913
2019g

Foreword

We are happy to publish one of the earliest "philosophical" texts of Jacques Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest' from 1963, which is about Karl Marx. In a short introduction written for this occasion, Rancière explains the circumstances of this text–it was written under the spell of Louis Althusser. To start with, it is this uneasy side–the Althusserian side–that provides us with some particular pride in presenting it as a Rab-Rab publication.

In this text, Rancière is claiming that young Marx at the beginning of the 1840s, when he was twenty-three years old, granted certain universality to the law (or the essence of law), which was in contradiction with the irrational acts of the judiciary system or the actual laws (i.e. the empirical law), thus seeing in the irrationality of the acts of law the reflection of "ill-will", or scandal. He argues that Marx's critique of the relation of private (capitalist) interest to the structures of the law is carried with the assumption that something might have gone wrong in this dialectic. By discussing Marx's question whether "lawlessness" of private interest can "lay down laws", Rancière asks: What do the presupposition of possible monitoring of capitalist lawlessness mean? For Rancière, and this is the most exciting part of the text, Marx failed to recognize the lawlessness at the core of the law, or precisely the irrationality and coercive arbitrariness of legislative constitution. Thus, there is no "logique dans l'absurdité" (as Marx wrote, in French) or irrationality of laws because of private interest; the very logic of capital is to operate in this way. Rancière comments wittily: "it is not private interest but Marx who is responsible for the logical error".

Rancière makes it clear that it is not a scandal, but an ordinary affair that the law and the capital are the same–they are part of the same procedure. It is arguable whether Marx, young or not, as Rancière pictures him, is the same one that gives inspiration to countless activists and theoreticians all over the world combatting both the neutrality of private interest and the universality of laws. For us, this particular interpretation of should not be a scholastic issue–an intimidation to



Jacques
Rancière

Marx in the Woods

The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest

Translation and Afterword by
Jussi Palmusaari

Rab-Rab Press
2019 Helsinki

struggle against capitalist lawlessness–for the
ory of Marxism is rich with examples combining
rous study with international political struggles.
What is urgent and indispensable to us is
cière's firm refusal of any middle-terms that
reducing philosophy, or theory, to a mere associ-
n of thoughts. This half-philosophy for Rancière
few others in the 1960s meant eclecticism.
ombat this, he uses a formalism of special sort,
h we call a *wild formalism*, systematising
ents (concepts) in order to destroy them. The
uage of this style is as if just invented. Con-
us to every concept, but driven by one idea to
erse the associative and representational
oaches in philosophy. It is formalism of vibrant
exhilarating impatience. It does not contain
shortcuts, recognisable patterns, or easy entry
s.

Considering that the subject of Rancière's
s the law, which is all about formalisation,
vild formalism posits questions towards the
site direction. The formalism of Rancière
rns from Marx some questions familiar to us:
ost important being the question of the state.
is what we, and many of the people we work
consider to be the principal thesis of Marxism–
ate is the instrument of capital and it performs
dicial duties in favour of the landowners".
, the idea that the state is the same as capital
starting point for every activist fighting
st the aggressive neoliberalist machinery.
s not something new for capitalism, which
rom the beginning, built its wealth and
ion through lawlessness.

Also, as any activist in the world opposing
wlessness knows, every struggle against
pital is coercively and brutally repressed.
s what Rancière names as "dialectic of crime"
mplains that Marx's conceptualization
ning in the shadow of Kant) "does not give
o a new form". At least not in 'Debates on the
n Thefts of Wood' written in 1842 about
ding of the sixth Rhine Province Assembly on
ft of the dead wood from the Rhine valley
, which is the focus of Rancière's analysis.
This strange text of Marx is considered by

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
THE
LIBRARIES

CHAPITRE III - RAISON ET INTERET PRIVE

I - Le problème de l'origine.

Dans l'examen de la loi sur les vols de bois, le problème central est encore le rapport entre la loi et le législateur.

" En exposant les débats de la Diète sur la loi sur le vol de "bois, nous exposons intégralement les débats de la Diète sur sa "propre vocation de législateur."(1)

Il s'agit de montrer comment le législateur dans son action empirique contredit l'essence de la loi parcequ'il s'attache non pas à l'intérêt général mais à un intérêt particulier. On connaît l'objet du débat : les propriétaires de forêts demandaient une répression plus sévère à l'encontre des paysans qui allaient ramasser du bois mort dans leurs fôrêts. Cet acte n'était considéré jusque là que comme délit. La nouvelle loi le considérait comme un vol, avec toutes les conséquences que cela pouvait entraîner. L'argumentation de Marx tend essentiellement à montrer comment les propriétaires, soucieux de leur seul intérêt, contredisent à chaque revendication nouvelle les principes qu'ils posaient pour justifier la précédente. Ainsi, par exemple, les propriétaires en ne faisant aucune distinction entre le vol de bois vert et le ramassage de bois mort, afin de pouvoir punir le second acte comme un vol, affirment le caractère indifférencié de l'objet. De même ils estiment "non pratique" de proportionner la peine à la valeur du bois dérobé. En revanche lorsqu'il est question de leur intérêt propre, les propriétaires réclament une indemnité spéciale fondée sur la valeur du bois, affirmant ainsi le caractère

.../..

1. Debatten über das Holzdiebstahlsgesetz. Octobre 1842. in Marx-Engels Werke. I,p.110 (not. V, 118). souligné par Marx.

Jacques
Rancière

Marx in the Woods

The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest

Translation and Afterword by
Jussi Palmusaari

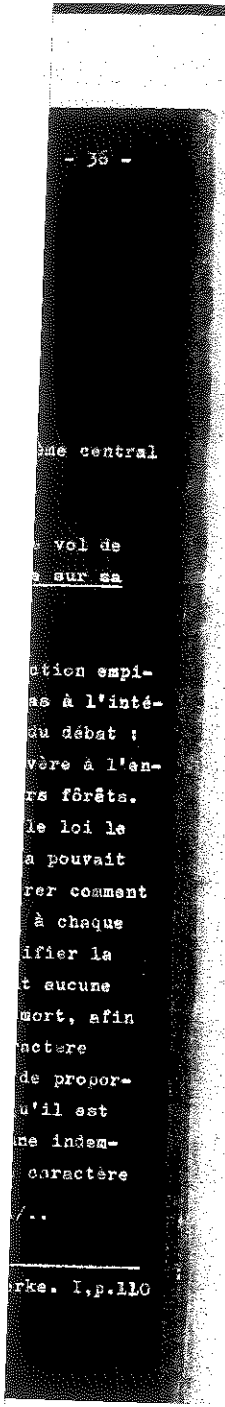
Rab-Rab Press
2019 Helsinki

Foreword

We are happy to publish one of the earliest "philosophical" texts of Jacques Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest' from 1963, which is about Karl Marx. In a short introduction written for this occasion, Rancière explains the circumstances of this text–it was written under the spell of Louis Althusser. To start with, it is this uneasy side–the Althusserian side–that provides us with some particular pride in presenting it as a Rab-Rab publication.

In this text, Rancière is claiming that young Marx at the beginning of the 1840s, when he was twenty-three years old, granted certain universality to the law (or the essence of law), which was in contradiction with the irrational acts of the judiciary system or the actual laws (i.e. the empirical law), thus seeing in the irrationality of the acts of law the reflection of "ill-will", or scandal. He argues that Marx's critique of the relation of private (capitalist) interest to the structures of the law is carried with the assumption that something might have gone wrong in this dialectic. By discussing Marx's question whether "lawlessness" of private interest can "lay down laws", Rancière asks: What do the presupposition of possible monitoring of capitalist lawlessness mean? For Rancière, and this is the most exciting part of the text, Marx failed to recognize the lawlessness at the core of the law, or precisely the irrationality and coercive arbitrariness of legislative constitution. Thus, there is no "logique dans l'absurdité" (as Marx wrote, in French) or irrationality of laws because of private interest; the very logic of capital is to operate in this way. Rancière comments wittily: "it is not private interest but Marx who is responsible for the logical error".

Rancière makes it clear that it is not a scandal, but an ordinary affair that the law and the capital are the same–they are part of the same procedure. It is arguable whether Marx, young or not, as Rancière pictures him, is the same one that gives inspiration to countless activists and theoreticians all over the world combatting both the neutrality of private interest and the universality of laws. For us, this particular interpretation of should not be a scholastic issue–an intimidation to



Jacques
Rancière

Marx in the Woods

The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest

Translation and Afterword by
Jussi Palmusaari

Rab–Rab Press
2019 Helsinki

BUTLSTAK
B
2430
.R273
M37913
2019

Introduction

The following text is taken from a chapter of my *diplôme d'études supérieures* entitled *L'idée critique chez le Jeune Marx,* which I defended in the spring of 1963 under the supervision of Paul Ricœur.

This work was inspired by Louis Althusser's article 'On the Young Marx' published in 1961.[1] Althusser's article was itself a response to an issue of the orthodox communist journal *Recherches internationales à la lumière du marxisme* devoted to the young Marx. At the time, the official Marxism was trying to recover the texts from Marx's youth, which until then had been used against it either by Marxist opponents and dissidents or by catholic theologians. Althusser was warning against this undertaking which was supposed to establish a continuity between the philosophical texts of the young Marx and the scientific work of *Capital*. He denounced above all the way in which some authors based their arguments on the similarity between the respective themes of the texts of Marx's youth and those of his maturity, while ignoring the most important thing: the theoretical framework through which these themes were problematised.
It was under the influence of Althusser's reading that I had chosen my topic. When my supervisor suggested that I work on the relations between alienation and fetishism, I responded that I wanted to work not on specific themes but on the way these themes were produced. The idea of critique, equally present in the texts of youth and the subtitle of *Capital*, seemed to me in this respect like a particularly apt subject of study. For, it allowed to move the emphasis from the thematic contents to the grids of thought which constituted them

as themes, and to analyse the way in which the same word *critique* was able to lend itself for different modes of problematisation.

The text that the young editor of *Rheinische Zeitung* had devoted to the debate on the law by which the Prussian Assembly had punished peasants for the theft of dead wood from aristocrats' lands provided a prime example in this respect. According to Engels' unverifiable statement, Marx had asserted that it was his confrontation with the social problems of Mosel wine-growers and the repression of the wood thieves that had made him become a communist. The question that I posed in respect to this assertion was: what does it mean to 'become a communist'? If it was a matter of adherence to a doctrine, the statement was entirely inaccurate: at the time the word 'communist' meant for the young Marx only a dogmatic theory which was proposing a ready-made solution to social problems. If it was a question of the first time he turned to analysing these problems from the viewpoint of what would become properly Marxist analysis, it is even more inaccurate. The demonstration of this point is at the core of my text: it is indeed true that Marx's article forms his first encounter with what would be at the core of Marxist thinking: the dependence of political law and its alleged universality on private economic interest. But here Marx interprets it in a completely different manner: this submission of the universal to interest, which the established Marxism would consider the inevitable consequence of an economic system, is understood as a scandal by the critic whose specific approach, more of Kantian than Hegelian inspiration, consists in comparing existence to essence, that which *is* to that which *ought to be*. The legislators are accused of not following their duties as servants of the law. Classical Marxism would in contrast say that

they follow their duties only too well because the ideal essence of law is only a mask covering its effective function in a class relation.

This is what I tried to demonstrate one afternoon of the winter 1961–1962, when this text was first presented as a contribution to a seminar on the young Marx. Althusser had initiated the seminar with a commentary on another text by the young journalist, the one which the latter had devoted to the law repressing the freedom of the press. As stated above, in the following year my analysis became a chapter of my *diplôme d'études supérieures*. This work concluded by loudly and clearly proclaiming the epistemological break between the young Marx and the mature Marx, of which *The German Ideology* had laid the principles. I have since questioned this notorious break in several occasions. What I consider to be more important today is to recognise the heterogeneity of the elements and articulations which form what is called Marxist theory.

Jacques Rancière
September 2018

1. 'Sur le jeune Marx. Questions de théorie', *La Pensée*, 96 (April–May 1961). Translated by Ben Brewster as "On the Young Marx": Theoretical Questions', in Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, London: New Left Books, 1969.

Jacques
Rancière

The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest

A. The problem of origin

In the study on the theft of wood, the central problem is still the relation between the law and the legislator.

> In our account of the Assembly debates on the law on thefts we are directly describing the *Assembly's debates on its vocation to legislation*.[1]

It is a question of showing how the legislator contradicts, in his practice, the essence of law because he attaches himself to a particular rather than a general interest. We know the subject of the debate: the forest owners were calling for a more severe repression of the peasants who were gathering dead wood in their forests. Until that time such activity had been considered only an offence. The new law considered it theft, with all due consequences. Marx's argument aims basically to show how with each new demand the owners, concerned solely with their own interest, contradict the principles they had asserted to justify the previous demand. For instance, by not making any distinction between the theft of growing wood and the gathering of dead wood, they maintain an undifferentiated character of the object in order to be able to punish the latter as a theft. Likewise, they consider it 'not practical' to make the punishment proportional to the value of the stolen wood. When it is a question of their own interest, however, the owners demand special compensation based on the value of wood, thus affirming a differentiated character of the object. In this way, the provisions of the law contradict each other, and if the law is contradictory with itself it is because, by taking private interest as its content, it is in contradiction with the essence of the law, i.e. with

the universal. The following question then arises: how can the law have private interests as its content? This question should lead us to a problem of origin. One would expect, if not a 'historical genesis', then a description of 'the moment of birth' of the *illusions* and *contradictions* denounced by Marx. Even if one thinks that this interference of private interest is an *error*, one should explain the possibility of this error. For, while the contradiction of the positive law with reason has a purely negative aspect – non-rationality – it can also have a positive aspect in raising the question of whether the law might have another content than rationality. Perhaps there is a *reason* for this unreason in reason. One should thus conduct a critique of the notion of law and at the same time investigate the genesis of the false consciousness. It seems that Marx indeed tries to take this direction. This is obvious from the way he deals with the problem of customary rights: he sets out to show that the demand of the noble, which relies on customary rights, is historically illegitimate because the legislation already recognizes all their rights and privileges. At the same time, he is demanding a customary right for the poor because they constitute a class which does not exist in the legal sphere, a class which manifests a form of negative universality because of its total deprivation. This is how Marx is changing the terrain. Unlike in the discussion of the law of the freedom of the press, we are no longer within a philosophical radicalism which understands the law only in relation to its object, that is, as the expression of rationality. Here the law is conceived as the expression of certain conditions of existence. If one remained in a purely rationalist conception of the law, the question of customary rights could not arise, but a customary right would show itself to be impossible. However, here the question is posed in the

following form: which class is entitled to customary rights? Marx's undertaking is thus to compare the entitlements of the rich and the poor classes to the benefit of customary rights. It is a matter of showing that the noble's claim is an historical error. Such a project is particularly interesting for, if carried out properly, it can begin to answer the question of why reason exists in the form of unreason. It can provide us with, if not a truly historical explanation, then at least a genetic one, in the Feuerbachian sense, of the irrational illusions of the representatives of the noble. Thus, it is interesting to follow Marx's analysis in detail, and to see how in an utterly paradoxical manner his historical critique is on the one hand a critique which passes from history to myth, and on the other hand a critique which fails to recognize itself by failing to recognize the historical signification of the myth.

> The so-called customs of the privileged classes are understood to mean *customs contrary to the law.* Their origin dates to the period in which human history was part of *natural history,* and in which, according to Egyptian legend, all gods concealed themselves in the shape of animals. Mankind appeared to fall into definite species of animals which were connected not by equality, but by inequality, an inequality fixed by laws. The world condition of non-freedom required laws expressing this non-freedom, for whereas human law is the mode of existence [*Dasein*] of freedom, this animal law is the mode of existence of non-freedom. *Feudalism* in the broadest sense is the *animal kingdom of the spirit,* the world of divided [*geschiedene*] mankind, in contrast to the human world that creates its own differentiations [*sich unterscheidende Menschheit*] and whose inequality is nothing but a refracted form of equality. In the countries of naive feudalism, in the countries of the caste system, where in the literal sense of the word people are put in separate boxes, and the noble, freely interchanging

> members of the great sacred body, the holy Humanus, are sawn and cleft asunder, forcibly torn apart, we find therefore also the *worship of animals,* animal religion in its primitive form, for man always regards as his highest being that which is his true being. The sole equality to be found in the actual life of animals is the equality between one animal and other animals of the same species; it is the equality of the given species [*Art*] with itself, but not the equality of the genus [*Gattung*]. The animal genus itself is seen only in the hostile behaviour of the different animal species, which assert their particular *distinctive* characteristics one against another. In the *stomach of the beast of prey,* nature has provided the battlefield of union, the crucible of closest fusion, the organ connecting the various animal species. Similarly, under feudalism one species feeds at the expense of another, right down to the species which, like the polyp, grows on the ground and has only numerous arms with which to pluck the fruits of the earth for higher races while it itself eats dust; for whereas in the natural animal kingdom the worker bees kill the drones, in the spiritual animal kingdom the drones kill the worker bees, and precisely by labour. When the privileged classes appeal from *legal right* to their *customary rights,* they are demanding, instead of the human content of right, its animal form, which has now lost its reality and become a mere animal mask.[2]

I have quoted this rather long passage in full because it appears crucial for grasping the presuppositions of Marx's critique, for seeing what his critique is and what it refuses to be. To begin with, this analysis of feudalism appears interesting in two respects. First, Marx relates the law to certain conditions of existence: 'The world condition of non-freedom required laws expressing this non-freedom'. He thus envisions a world where the law is an expression of non-freedom and inequality. The law sanctions this existing state of things,

the right of the strongest. Such a conception seems to be a step forward from the univocal conception of the law as the existence of freedom and expression of rationality. Second, Marx has a specific aim in his attack against feudalism: to demystify the idyllic idea of feudalism, i.e. the Romantic interpretation of the theorists of the Historical School based on an idealized image of the Middle Ages. Marx wants to contrast the mythical paradise of the Germanic forests with the reality of feudalism. It is all the more interesting to see how this reality is presented in the form of a myth. In order to give an expression of what feudalism is, Marx provides us with a mythical representation of it.

According to this representation, the truth of feudalism lies in the animal religion. Right from the start, Marx has formulated the following equation: feudal world = world of non-freedom = animal world. Animal religion is the true representation of feudalism, or, rather, the truth of feudalism as representation. Marx thus shows himself to be incapable of thinking a historical reality according to historical categories. The history of feudalism is converted into a myth of feudalism, a myth which is a representation of the world of unreason.

This world can only be expressed in the form of a myth, for describing it in the language of rationality and universality would only produce a series of negations. In his attempt at historical analysis Marx falls immediately back into the dichotomy of reason/unreason, human world/animal world. He can only think history as prehistory, or natural history, that is, history that precedes reason. The concept of animality is an indication of this rationalist dichotomy. We find it in the manifesto against the Historical School of Jurisprudence where Marx reproaches Gustav Hugo

for having claimed that the animal element [*das Tierische*] constitutes the juridical characteristic of man. It also appears in the response to the editorial of *Kölnische Zeitung* when refuting Hermes for having extolled the benefits of religion. Thus, Marx can characterize feudalism only as a world of unreason, a world of animality, and his project of historical critique immediately refutes itself. But if history is transformed into a myth, within this myth there is an unrecognised history, a denied history. Indeed, let us examine the characteristics of this animal kingdom of the spirit.[3] It is a world that has a law which is the law of non-freedom, and a religion which is the expression of its true being: 'man always regards as his highest being that which is his true being'. We find here two possible forms of critique of the real world: analysis of the law as the expression of certain historical conditions of existence on one hand, and the anthropological explanation of the relation of man to his objectifications on the other. But these two forms of explanation – or critique – are presented as valid only in the pre-human world, in the world of animality. They are reserved to the animal kingdom of the spirit. The human world, in contrast, is the world of *law*, and in this world the point of departure cannot be man, the anthropological subject, or his determined condition, but the rational essence of man which is at the same time the rational essence of legislation. Thus, in the human world the law is not linked to a determined historical situation but to the universal essence of man. Man is no longer tied to a historical but to a rational determination.

Marx will speak later of the present epoch as the epoch of general laws. However, the relation between feudalism and the 'epoch of general laws' is in fact not historical but ontological. The gap between the feudal world and the modern world is not a gap between two

historical forms which would succeed one another in time, but between two essences which are mutually exclusive – and one of which is actually a non-essence, the world of the 'life of species'. Thus, the relation of the law to determined conditions of existence is only valid in the animal kingdom of the spirit. Let us also examine the 'theory of religion' included in this passage, according to which religion is the expression of man's true being. Here Marx takes up the critique of religion undertaken in the 18th century and brought to completion by Feuerbach. But this critique is applied only to the animal world. In the animal kingdom of the spirit, the essence of man is represented in religion.

Hence, in this passage where we can find the shadow of Feuerbach, we can also find the following para-dox: Feuerbachian anthropology is thought of as the law of the world of unreason, the law of the *animal* world. Every time that Feuerbachian schemes are found in this text, they refer not to normal human processes but to processes that manifest the degradation of man in the system of selfishness and private interest. For instance, in many places we find an echo of the Feuerbachian theory according to which the object of man is his very essence in an objectified form. For Feuerbach, this externalization of the human essence in objects is a necessary process, and the only concern for man is to recognise himself in the object and to re-appropriate himself.

> One knows the man by the objects that reflects his being; the object lets his being appear to you; the object is his manifest being, his true, objective ego. This is true not only of intellectual but also of sensuous objects. Even those objects which are farthest removed from man are manifestations of his own specific mode of being because, and in so far as, they are objects for him.[4]

However, for Marx this objectification of the human essence in an external object is proper to the world of private interest:

> Private interest [...] is always cowardly, for its heart, its soul, is an external [äusserlicher] object which can always be wrenched away and injured, and who has not trembled at the danger of losing heart and soul? How could the selfish [*eigennützige*] legislator be human when something inhuman, an alien material essence [*ein fremdes materielles Wesen*], is his supreme essence?[5]

If man has his essence in an external object, it is because of the inherent limitation of private interest which does not recognise the true essence of man. Thus, the world of real historical or anthropological processes is for Marx a non-human world. One can see how he eludes the problem of history twice: First he passes from history to myth, by substituting a mythic representation for historical analysis. Then he integrates into this myth, which represents the world of unreason, the elements that would enable a critique of the real world. The animal kingdom of the spirit is projected onto the real history of feudalism, and into this myth Marx projects elements of the real world. These elements are rejected in respect to the world as it is, since this world is thought only according to what it is presumed to be in itself: the world of reason, the 'epoch of general laws'.

The rest of the depiction is based on the same presuppositions. The world of feudalism and corporations is understood according to the rational dichotomy of human world/animal world. It is defined as the opposite of reason: a world of division, a world of dislocation as opposed to differentiation, or the rational process in the nature of things. Feudalism, the world of the life of species is opposed to the modern

world of reason. We see here the beginning of the critique of feudalism that Marx would conduct in the 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law': the feudal world is a world of *immediacy* where individuals are determined by the immediate conditions of their existence. There again we find the equation feudalism = the animal world.

> In this system the *physical dignity of the human being* or the *dignity of the human body* (in other words, the dignity of the physical, natural element of the state) appears in such a way that certain dignities, and indeed the highest social dignities, are the *dignities of certain bodies predestined by birth*. It is therefore natural that the nobility should be proud of their blood, their descent, in short the *life-history of their bodies;* it is, of course, this *zoological* way of looking at things which has its corresponding science in *heraldry*. The secret of the nobility is *zoology*.[6]

Feudalism is the world of the life of determined species where there is no unity of *genus* (here the concept refers to the rational universal and not to the Feuerbachian generic being), but where the genus is only an anthropological – one should say, zoological – a priori: the war of all against all.

A. The last lines of the passage are characteristic of the way in which Marx approaches certain themes, without developing all their implications. Thus, the feudal hierarchy ends in a kind of dialectic where the species are reduced to two antagonistic terms, nobility and peasants, the first "race" exploiting the labour of the second. This dialectic calls for two remarks:

There is a reversal of the natural animal kingdom into a spiritual animal kingdom. Feudalism was originally founded on the right of the strongest, but here it is the weakest who dominate the strongest by using their own strength against them. Therefore,

we have a social situation which no longer corresponds to its conditions of existence. Feudalism has changed into its opposite. However, Marx seems to consider this element of the critique of the real world only a supplementary contradiction to be added to all the other anomalies of the world of unreason. One can see that we are still far from the master–slave dialectic. Didn't Hesiod already describe the nobility as 'bumblebees who steal the honey from the hard-working bees'?

B. Domination of the superior race is founded on the labour of the inferior race. The alienation of the productive force of labour for the profit of the exploiting class is here recognised, but it is understood in the framework of the feudal model of which the two terms are a more or less mythical nobility and peasantry.

All the difficulties that I have stressed in this passage are found in the interpretation that Marx provides of this model of feudalism. One would expect the logical conclusion: that the customary right of the noble is a relic of an anterior social state. However, in Marx's interpretation the idea of the customary right presupposes a form of existence which is not the one we live in. The noble's claim assumes the form of another content in order to apply it to the real human content of modern society. There is a logical contradiction between the form adopted by the demands of the noble and the human content, that is to say, the content of a human society in the age of Enlightenment and revolutions. In fact, the idea of customary right of nobility does not refer to an older world but to a world which is radically opposed to that of reason. The human world is not engendered by the animal world according to a real dialectic. We are not confronted with a historical differentiation but with an ontological distinction: there is a human form which corresponds to a human content, and an animal form which corresponds to an

animal content. We are by rights in a world of human content where it is impossible to make use of an animal form – just as it is impossible to make use of the general human form of the law for the realization of a particular interest relating to the 'animal content'. Again, it is a question of a logical error as well as a physical error: it is a question of people who mistake one world for another.

I have analysed this passage at some length because it seems to offer a useful illustration of what we might call the non-critical side of Marx's critique in the texts published in *Rheinische Zeitung*: the real problems which are evaded, the kinds of explanation which are rejected, an impossibility of thinking history in any other way than within the reason/unreason structure. The model of feudalism explains nothing and, at bottom, was not capable of explaining anything. In fact, Marx uses it not to explain the possibility of the claims of the nobility or to demonstrate that these claims are not justified, but simply to situate them in the domain of the night,[7] and to show the *truth* of the position of the representatives of the nobility. The animal kingdom of the spirit is the truth of the action of the noble's representatives in the Assembly. Here again one should not think of Hegel but Kant: it is a question of showing to the nobility what they will *de facto* and what they cannot will *de jure*, to expose the maxim of their action at the level of the universal: the end which is implied in their manner of legislating is non-legislation, the right of the strongest. The animal kingdom of the spirit is in a sense the reverse of the kingdom of ends.

One can see that Marx's aim is not to explain a possibility but to show an impossibility. Thus, his critique cannot be anything other than a critique of an error, a critique of an ill will. The only critique consists

in showing always and everywhere the gap between the law as it must be and the law as it is made by the legislators who are blinded by private interest. One does not have to explain this fact – to do so would be a way to justify it – it is simply to be denounced as a scandal. It is therefore only a question of demonstrating the mechanisms through which private interest, in its wrongful claim to legislate according to its own principles, abuses reason and degrades the State.

B. The Contradictions of Private Interest

Thereafter Marx's critique will be completely eristic, everywhere bringing to light contradictions which relate back to the fundamental contradiction: the confusion of two worlds, the intrusion of private interest into the field of law. I would like to bring out two essential elements of this critique: the exposition of the 'system' of private interest and the demonstration of the necessary contradictions to which it is driven.

a. The Sophistry of private interest

To criticize private interest amounts essentially to showing that it *cannot* be used as a principle, that it is incapable of establishing universal legislation. For this, one has to study the system of private interest in practice, and the logic at work in its conception of the world (Marx speaks of *Weltanschauung* of private interest). Marx repeatedly tries to define what he calls the logic or sophistry of private interest. As with Romanticism, it is a matter of seeing the principle of particularity which has to present itself as universal, of seeing that which is only a series of expedients in the form of a system. The sophistry of private interest shows itself, for example, in the fact that, in order to justify their claims, the representatives of the nobility do not hesitate to appeal to concepts that belong to the modern world, a world which amounts to the refutation of their claims. Thus, their argument against the life appointment of the forest wardens is that 'the *free will* (*der freie Wille*) *of private persons* should not be restricted'.[8] This resort to free will contradicts

the feudal content of the nobiliary demand, for it borrows from the world of reason to fight the world of reason:

> Only once has there been mention of free will, and on this one occasion it appears in the shape of a squat private person who hurls blocks of wood at the spirit of rational will.[9]

Hence, the logic of private interest is a '*logique dans l'absurdité*'.[10] And it is such because of its initial refutation of a purely rational determination, because of categories which import alien determinations to the rational essence of the law. There are indeed categories (*Hauptkategorien*) of private interest, which are 'good motives' (*guten Motive*) and 'harmful results' (*nachteilige Folgen*).[11] The deputies have thus two different recourses, two lines of flight: either they emphasize harmful results that the law can have in order to deny those whom they oppress the benefit of the law, or else they justify their own injustices by the good motives behind them. In both cases the thing itself is neglected, and the legislation is determined by motives derived either from the world of interests or from an ideal world:

> both, the good motives and the harmful results, have in common the peculiar feature that they do not look at a thing in relation to itself, that they do not treat the law as an independent [*selbständigen*] object, but direct attention away from the law either to the external world or to their own mind, that therefore they manoeuvre behind the back of the law.[12]

We are still dealing with mysticism and pragmatism. And one is tempted to think here of texts where Kant contrasts the autonomous and universal determination of the will with empiricism on one hand, and with

mysticism on the other, with the difference that here mysticism only serves to mask empiricism, to mask particular interests. This comparison can help us understand Marx's critique: the model that he uses to judge the deputies is that of practical reason which determines itself in a universal manner. This is the essence of legislation, an essence that the deputies must realize and that *de jure* nothing could stop them from realizing. It is because they deviate from it that they fall into endless contradictions – because they do not possess a fixed measure and the maxim of their action can never be universalised.

b. The transcendental dialectic of private interest

> We do not intend to argue with the world outlook of personal interest, but we want to compel it to be consistent. [...] We want to make the sophistic spirit of private interest abide for a moment by its own conclusions.[13]

I will not go into the details of these countless and contradictory consequences of the sophistic spirit of private interest. I will stick to the main aspect of Marx's criticism: private interest degrades the state – just like empiricism for Kant degrades practical reason. It tends to reverse the relations by elevating itself to the level of the state and by lowering the state to the point where it can be made its instrument. The landowners thus make the state into their property in that they pocket the fines which in principle have nothing to do with civil law but should be paid to the state since they constitute the public penalty of the crime. The state abandons by the same token its judicial duties in favour of the landowners. The land-

owners thus attribute to themselves qualities which belong to the state. However, because they do not have the means of the state at their disposal, the state needs to come to their assistance and become their servant. Thus, it is up to the mayor of the community to force the insubordinate offenders to work, work which is then of course deducted from the hours of manual service that the owners owe to the community. In this way, private interest tends to present itself as the state but because it does not possess the universal means of the state, it forces the state to privatise these means and to put them in service of particular interests. Private property brings the state into conflict with itself, and the Assembly, which is 'a representation of private interests' (*eine Vertretung der Privatinteressen*),[14] works toward lowering the state to the ideas of private interest. But just like the deputies *are wrong* to emphasize their private interests over their duties as legislators, the state degrades itself by making itself an instrument of private interests:

> If the state, even in a single respect, stoops so low as to act in the manner of private property instead of in its own way, the immediate consequence is that it has to adapt itself in the form of its means to the narrow limits of private property. [...] Every modern state, however little it corresponds to its concept, will be compelled to exclaim at the first practical attempt at such legislative power: Your ways are not my ways, your thoughts are not my thoughts![15]

This dialectic culminates in what we could call a dialectic of crime. As we have seen, the fines of the offenders were received by the owners, and in this way the latter acquired a public right over them. Taking this to its ultimate conclusion, the owners demanded forced labour from the offender who had turned out to

be insolvent. Thus, they received an absolute guarantee for their property, instead of merely a civil guarantee. Thanks to a theft, their property is guaranteed for them absolutely by the state. But this means that the state ceases to guarantee the right of the person and agrees to enslave a free man. What the state gives to private property, it takes from right:

> The state can and must say: I guarantee right against all contingencies. Right alone is immortal in me, and therefore I prove to you the mortality of crime by doing away with it. But the state cannot and must not say: a private interest, a particular existence of property, a wooded plot of land, a tree, a chip of wood (and compared to the state the greatest tree is hardly more than a chip of wood) is guaranteed against all contingencies, is immortal. The state cannot go against the nature of things, it cannot make the finite proof against the conditions of the finite, against accident. Just as your property cannot be guaranteed by the state against all contingencies *before* a crime, so also a crime cannot convert this uncertain nature of your property into its opposite. [...] If, however, the state wanted to make the criminal your temporary serf, it would be sacrificing the immortality of the law to your finite private interests. It would prove thereby to the criminal the mortality of the law, whereas by punishment it ought to prove to him its immortality.[16]

Thus, at first we have, on the one hand, private property which is of an unstable and perishable nature, and, on the other hand, the immortal law guaranteed against all accidents. However, crime changes every element into its opposite: the law becomes mortal, it becomes private property, while private property becomes immortal, it become the law. One can see that it is not a question of a positive dialectic which would give birth to something new, such as, for example, the

dialectic of the state and wealth in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Crime simply turns everything into its opposite. The mediation of crime does not give birth to a new form but remains trapped in an insurmountable contradiction. For here dialectic does not signify an objective process but is an exemplary demonstration of the *'logique dans l'absurdité'* of private interest. If there is a dialectic here, it is in the Kantian sense of the word. The dialectic of the law and private property is inevitable as soon as one deviates from the rational and universal determination of the law and takes an empirical principle as a starting point. Private interest is thus a power which falls into necessary contradictions as soon as it wants to legislate outside its proper domain. As soon as private interest starts to legislate, it falls into logically insoluble contradictions. But one can say that it falls into them out of necessity and that in them it necessarily reveals its nature.

I have used the phrase 'transcendental dialectic of private interest', and I should now justify its use. It is obvious that, on the one hand, Marx does not *apply* the Kantian dialectic and that, on the other hand, the two dialectics cannot be superimposed. Thus, in the dialectic presented here by Marx, it is not the a priori legislative faculty that exceeds its limits; it is, on the contrary, the absence of a priori – empiricism – that is the principal driving force of antinomies. We have nevertheless chosen to use this expression to give an account of the form of the process described by Marx and the theoretical horizon from which it derives. Moreover, we know that 'philosophers do not spring up like mushrooms', and it is rather obvious that the Kantian transcendental dialectic refers to a range of uses of dialectic, and particularly to the more or less latent but almost always present discursive structure through which Enlightenment reason grasps the

world. (What else is the critique of antinomies of Pure Reason if not the most systematic form of the critique of prejudices?) In its most simple form this structure can be formulated as follows: demonstration of the necessary contradictions which result from the non-recognition of a limitation, of an originary impossibility. This is exactly what we find in the text at issue: the contradictions into which private interest falls, along with everything it touches, relate back to the impossibility in law of legislation by private interest – an impossibility *de jure* which is also an impossibility *de facto*:

> interest by its very nature is blind, immoderate, one-sided; in short, it is lawless natural instinct, and can lawlessness lay down laws? Private interest is no more made capable of legislating by being installed on the throne of the legislator than a mute is made capable of speech by being given an enormously long speaking-trumpet.[17]

Private interest cannot legislate. The conclusion must be that one should not appeal to it in legislation. First there is a prejudice – an error or an ill will – of the deputies who *should have* placed the general interests of the province before the interests of their caste:

> however contradictory these two tasks may be, in case of conflict there should not be a moment's delay in sacrificing representation of particular interest to representation of the interests of the province.[18]

Here one can see clearly how the philosophical presuppositions of the young Marx blind him to reality. Faced with the problem of the determined content of the law, he is not able to really pose the question of the unity of private interest and the law, to think the origin of the law. He nevertheless notices the fact

that private interest makes logical mistakes and at the same time it does not make logical mistakes. It is illogical to the extent that in support of one interest it contradicts the arguments that it makes in support of another, and to the extent that it makes the state contradict itself. But it does not contradict itself, for it is only thinking of itself. '[I]t is not concerned about contradictions, for it never comes into contradiction with itself'.[19] In this sense it is true that it is incapable of providing universal legislation. But this universal legislation is itself a philosophical idea. In other words, in the transcendental dialectic of private interest, it is not private interest but Marx who is responsible for the logical error. It is he who, in the name of an a priori dichotomy, postulates as antinomic terms, on the one hand, a reality of private interest and, on the other hand, a pure concept, i.e. the world of law (State, Assembly, Right). However, this world of law, this rational state does not exist as positive reality. Marx simply assumes that the two terms have a form and a content of their own. He sets out here from the philosophical presupposition of a state which has a content of its own, a presupposition which is founded on a dichotomy between the state and civil society, or the society of 'selfishness'. This society of needs is an atomized society, a society of selfish people separated from each other and, by the same token, from their human essence. The coming together of human beings, or the human essence is found in the political society, which is a society governed by the principles of reason and humanity. In this sense, Marx's critique is limited to stating that the particular is not the universal. But this presupposes that political society is universal, that political law is determined by practical reason.

I do not wish to take the easy route of making the young Marx stand trial before the tribunal of his-

tory. I only want to bring to light the existence of a problem and the impossibility to think this problem. It is impossible because the unity of fact (law-private interest) is denied a priori by a duality of law presented as a duality of fact.[20]

Thus, the mystical unreason confessed its truth to be private interest. But this private interest is not thought in any other way than as unreason. We can therefore see the meaning and the limits of the critique in the texts published in *Rheinische Zeitung*. We are dealing with a critique which does not give an account of its object because it is not meant to give an account of it – any more than it is for Kant or Hegel to explain crime, as this would ultimately be to suppose that the crime could not have not been committed. What we are dealing with is clearly a critique of ill will. Thus, the relation of private interest with the law is understood as a scandal, and regarding this scandal, the critique can only do two things:

a. to raise the question at the level of principles; to formulate the adverse principle, i.e. the romantic principle against which Marx continues the fight started by Ruge, a fight which is that of the heirs of *Aufklärung*. It is a matter of situating this principle in the world where it belongs, and to reveal its presuppositions and the universe it aims to establish (the animal kingdom of the spirit).

b. to show the absurdity to which this principle leads in practice, that it is incapable of developing according to reason, incapable of legislating. This principle is practically refuted by the absurdity of its own dialectic. Thus, the critique expresses the necessity of a process, but at the same time the contingency of its point of departure. It addresses the legislator to show to him that he cannot will the animal kingdom of the spirit, nor the contradictions into which

he falls. However, by the same token it indicates to him the right point of departure. By placing the problems at the level of practical reason, it provides the legislator with the model of legislation. It itself demonstrates what legislation must be.

However, in this way the critique remains trapped in its unilaterality without being able to do anything other than wait for the legislator's good will. It is like Fourier, who every day at noon waited for the capitalists whom he had invited to a meeting so as to convince them of the advantages of his system. As we know, Fourier kept waiting until his death. Marx had perhaps more luck: it was the Prussian government that didn't wait. Increased censorship forced Marx to abandon *Rheinische Zeitung*. It then became clear that it was not enough to oppose the day of reason and the idea with the night of the fact, but that one had to set oneself to studying this night, and to discover in it the reason which was only looking to be brought to the light of day. For that there was a model: Feuerbach had just shown that one could tear religion from the night of mysticism and theology in order to find in it reason and man, alienated and lost, but already found again because they were recognized. Thenceforth the task of critique was to find in the night the promise of the day, to identify itself with this dawn of a 'new epoch of the history of humanity'.

Translated by Jussi Palmusaari*

1. Karl Marx, 'Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood' [1842], in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 1 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), p. 225, translation modified.
2. Ibid., p. 230–231, translation modified.
3. The relation of the animal kingdom of the spirit to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is of course only a homonymy.
4. Ludwig Feuerbach, 'Introduction to the *Essence of Christianity*' [1841], in *The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings*, trans. Zawar Hanfi (London: Verso, 2012), p. 101.
5. Karl Marx, 'Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood', p. 236.
6. Karl Marx, 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' [1843], in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), p. 106.
7. Here one thinks of the theme of *barbarism* in the *Aufklärung* philosophers. They, too, present an ontological distinction as a historical one.
8. Marx-Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 244, translation modified.
9. Ibid., pp. 244–245.
10. Ibid., p. 245, original in French.
11. Ibid., p. 248.
12. Ibid, emphasis removed.
13. Ibid., p. 242, translation modified.
14. Ibid., 241, translation modified.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., pp. 256–257.
17. Ibid., p. 261.
18. Ibid., p. 262.
19. Ibid., p. 247.
20. It is indeed rather obvious that Marx's method can be explained by the very object that he is dealing with: the German political reality in its archaic character, the monarchy under Fredrick William IV, the assemblies of estates, predominance of landed privileges. More precisely, it can be explained by the gap between the philosophical radicalism in which the young Marx was trained, and the reality which he encounters, that is, the gap between the radicalism of the Kantian conception of law and the reality of pseudo-representative legislative assemblies which were assemblies of the estates. Furthermore, whenever Marx speaks about private property it is always a question of landed property, and when he comes across private interest he understands it according to the notion of privilege. Thus, the very terms of the question of the relation between private interest and the law are different from the ones that Marx would envision later.

* I am grateful to Philippe Le Goff, Niall Kennedy, and Jacques Rancière for their comments and help with the translation – JP.

Jussi
Palmusaari

Philosophers Don't Spring Up Like Mushrooms

On Rancière's Heretic Method[1]

We are familiar with the young Rancière's masterful piece in *Reading Capital* (1965). The text precedes his famous 'break' with Althusser, following the leftist radicalisation of many of Althusser's students after May 1968. In his contribution to the volume devoted to rehabilitate the scientific rigour of Marx, Rancière seeks to demonstrate the incompatibility between the problematics of the young Marx on one hand, and the Marx of *Capital* on the other. There the text representing Marx's youth is *The 1844 Manuscripts*.[2] 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest', translated in the present book, gives us a glimpse of a slightly younger Rancière analysing a text of a slightly younger Marx. As Rancière explains in the new introduction, this endeavour was already of Althusserian inspiration, and the dissertation from which it is extracted served to present the same argument that would be made in *Reading Capital*.

I would like to use the now translated 'Dialectic' as a starting point for a discussion which aims to trace a peculiar logic formed by Rancière's trajectory. This logic operates by discerning continuities and discontinuities between the reasonings which Rancière criticises only to join them later in altered forms. It can be characterised as a heretic logic in that it never fully leaves the positions it breaks with. He does not break with them in order to move on, but rather to remain with the fractions thus created. The most important of these rupturous continuities is perhaps the one formed with Althusser, but here I will discuss also Rancière's relation to Ludwig Feuerbach as well as to the Kantianism characteristic of the young Marx that Rancière criticises in 'Dialectic'. This early text is apt to set the stage for my discussion, because it constructs its critique of Marx by differentiating between different kinds of distinction, different kinds of continuity and

discontinuity, formed through their relation to time or timelessness. As such, it lays coordinates that are particularly suitable for accessing the rupturous circle around which Rancière's thought revolves. "Philosophers don't spring up like mushrooms", as Rancière states in his early text, claiming that the young Marx's philosophy is still operating inside a Kantian antinomic logic. Adopting the slogan, I will read Rancière in light of earlier thinkers whose framework I still see operative in his thought. However, this no longer marks a lack of progress, a lack of *new* philosophical frameworks, which are about to emerge. Rather, it relates to the fundamental principle to which Rancière's later writings stick to. This is a principle which rejects any idea of progress and wagers on equality as a polemic coexistence with others and other times.

Setting out from 'Dialectic', I will follow Rancière's relation with Althusser from this early text to the famous 'break' with his early mentor. But calling this a break *with* Althusser simplifies things, for in actual fact, it rearranges his relation with Althusser by enouncing a break *within* him. Soon, however, this rearranged relation will pave the way to a new break, through which Rancière adopts aspects from the very Althusser abandoned by the first break, while rejecting the ones that this first break left intact. This return to Althusserian themes in no way amounts to a rehabilitation of Althusser's position, but rather to a rupturous creation of something different from them. To show what this is, I go back to Feuerbach, whose critical treatment in Rancière's earlier work here returns to contribute positively to Rancière's method. Reading Rancière's thought in light of these discontinuous continuities will provide me with a vantage point from which I can return to the 1963 'Dialectic' and conclude

by situating the 'mature' Rancière in relation to the different distinctions, presented there in reference of Kant.

1. Ontological and Historical Distinctions

In 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest' Rancière analyses Marx's discussion of debates at the Rhine Province Assembly on thefts of wood. Rancière argues that, in this text from 1842, Marx fails to think history "according to historical categories".[3] In contrast, Marx's discourse is based on Kantian 'philosophical radicalism' which simply judges a historical state of affairs according to the law of practical reason: it judges what is according to what ought to be. Hence, Marx's moralist reasoning criticises the Assembly legislators for allowing their legislating practice to be guided by private interest and neglecting their duty to act in accordance with the universality of the law. By such a critique, Rancière argues, Marx evades historical explanations of the actual law and fails to see how it relates to the given state of things. Instead of pointing at material, class-specific interests and explaining the function of the actual law according to them, Marx sees in it an expression of a certain animal essence, which belongs to the reality of feudalism. Against this mythic "animal kingdom of the spirit" Marx posits reason and humanity which accord with the formal universality of the Kantian practical reason. The difference between these two is not one between historical realities, but it is an 'ontological distinction'.[4]

The problem is that such an 'ontological distinction' does not allow to understand the two forms within a mediating dimension of historical *time* which could allow an explanation capable of giving an account of historical transformation: in Marx's analysis "[t]he gap between the feudal world and the modern world is not a gap between two historical forms which

would succeed one another in time, but between two essences", i.e. the human essence on the one hand, and the animal essence on the other.[5] Rancière thus argues that Marx's Kantian dialectic consists simply in laying out the contradiction, without being able to make it a developmental force, a motor for change.

Rancière develops his critique of the young Marx's atemporal Kantian framework by distinguishing it from two superior modes of explanation which are of historical nature. He shows how Marx's text makes partial use of these historical reasonings and yet fails to embrace them properly. While Marx points at them in explaining the feudal reality, the rational conditions of humanity posited against feudalism fall short of the historicity that they would allow. They figure like the opposite of history, as something akin to Kant's 'kingdom of ends' – i.e. a purely rational moral regime beyond phenomenal reality. One of the historical modes of explanation, which Marx fails to make full use of, is the Feuerbachian 'genetic' explanation, contemporary with Marx. It would soon come to define Marx's own framework, and as Rancière argues in his contribution to *Reading Capital* in 1965, the Feuerbachian framework thoroughly characterises Marx's *The Manuscripts of 1844*.[6] The other historical framework making appearance in Marx is a 'truly historical [*vraiment historique*]' explanation, which we should understand as the historical-materialist explanation along the lines of Marx's *The German Ideology* with its determined critique of philosophical ideologies from the materialist perspective.[7] While the Feuerbachian framework moves in the teleological immanence of an anthropological subject, the second would explain a given form of thought according to the ideological and material conditions of the time in which it is rooted. Both the

Feuerbachian genetic explanation and the historical-materialist explanation would allow for the critique to place itself within a mediating sphere of time, which Marx's Kantianism fails to do.

Rancière's reading of Marx here follows the classification of frameworks presented in Althusser's text 'On the Young Marx'. As Althusser explains there, Feuerbach's anthropological model was an 'advanced', albeit still ideological model for understanding historical reality.[8] While not properly historical in the historical-materialist sense, it was considered superior to Marx's initial Kantian-moralist, or 'liberal', reasoning precisely because it allowed to present the relation between a critique and its object in a temporal medium, and thus allowed an account of historical transformation. Unlike the Kantian model, it allowed to combine the idea (i.e. the idea of justice represented by the law of practical reason) and the fact (unjust material conditions). As Althusser explains, "the Young Hegelians, who believed there was a goal to history", found in Feuerbach someone who "at last reconciled *idea* and *fact*, and made the necessity of a world's contradiction and the necessity of its liberation comprehensible".[9] Along similar lines, Rancière finishes 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest' by stating that in Feuerbach Marx's critique would find a way to immerse itself in the temporal movement of the presently emerging 'epoch of humanity', and thus find a way for his critical discourse to be attached to the unfolding of history.

However, Feuerbach's anthropological-historical model was associated with a teleological scheme based on the view of a subjective essence that revealed history as a 'necessary process' and hence provided it with a pregiven orientation.[10] As Rancière states in *Reading Capital*, within such a model "we are never

concerned with anything other than a history of the human essence. [...] Indeed, everywhere we must recognize the same history. Everywhere it is the human essence which is being expressed".[11] Thus, if the Feuerbachian model allowed Marx's critical categories to be placed in a temporal medium, this temporality was without specificity of the actual material and ideological conditions of an actual historical present. It was thoroughly predetermined by the "original [...] unity of a subject and its essence".[12] It was, to quote Althusser, without 'real history [*histoire réelle*]'.[13]

The young Rancière is conscious of the superiority of the materialist conception of 'real history' in his analysis of Marx's early article on the Assembly debates. This is clear from how he distinguishes the Feuerbachian 'genetic' explanation from the 'truly historical' approach which serves as the ultimate framework in his discussion. In the last footnote of his essay, Rancière writes:

> It is indeed rather obvious that Marx's method can be explained by the very object that he is dealing with: the German political reality in its archaic character, the monarchy under Fredrick William IV, the assemblies of estates, predominance of landed privileges. More precisely, it can be explained by the gap between the philosophical radicalism in which the young Marx was trained, and the reality which he encounters, that is, the gap between the radicalism of the Kantian conception of law and the reality of pseudo-representative legislative assemblies which were assemblies of the estates.[14]

The discrepancy between Marx's philosophical training and the social reality he was living in was a discrepancy which stopped Marx from achieving a historical understanding of this reality. For Rancière, seeing this discrepancy as it is allowed to grasp the continuity between the non-understanding and its

socio-ideological base. 'Real history' consisted in this continuity. Following Althusser, the young Rancière believes that understanding of Marx's discourse

> depends [...] on its relation to the existing *ideological field* and on the *social problems and social structure* which sustain the ideology and are reflected in it; the sense of the *development* of a particular ideology depends [...] on the relation of this development [...] to the relation found within this development between the mutations of the particular ideology and the mutations in the ideological field and the social problems and relations that sustain it.[15]

Hence, Marx's discourse was to be understood in light of the "*historical period in which he lives*", rather than in relation to an original unity along Feuerbachian lines. And the evolution of the relation between Marx's thought and its ideological and historical surroundings needed to be thought as such, at "each moment of its development", without basing its history on a pregiven essence.[16]

Rancière's early text on Marx thus constitutes itself upon three elements which figure as so many (dis)continuities: 1) the Kantian antinomic contradiction between the universal and the particular, the human and the animal; 2) the Feuerbachian idea of progress, understood on the basis of the unfolding of human essence in history; and 3) the Althusserian-Marxist notion of 'real history', understood in terms of the complexity of social and ideological conditions which define a given moment or period. In what follows I would like to present a selective reading of Rancière's subsequent trajectory in order to show how these elements go through specific transformations in order to later come to constitute Rancière's distinctive method.

2. Epistemological and Political Breaks

As explained above, Althusser's article 'On the Young Marx' presented a Marxian method of historical enquiry in reference to 'real history' which consisted in the multiplicity of material and ideological conditions *of a given time* as such without an appeal to a unifying essence or 'telos' which would determine the course of history. It is such a view that defines Rancière's position in his 1963 essay on Marx. Soon, however, Althusser started to further elaborate and complicate his interpretation of the Marxist notion of history. Marx's transition to a materialist framework was no longer characterised simply as a shift from the realm of ideas to the materiality of '*the facts* themselves', but as an epistemological break, which left the terrain of ideology for a properly *scientific reconstruction* of historical reality.[17] While 'On the Young Marx' had simply emphasised a given temporal present in history, without reference to a pregiven end towards which it is directed, Althusser's new account of historical time could no longer be unproblematically linked with any historical 'present' as such. Rather, Althusser now radically problematised historical time, arguing that a historical form of society, or a 'social formation', consists of multiple instances or levels, each of which follows its own temporal rhythm: "it is no longer possible to think the process of the development of the different levels of the whole *in the same historical time*".[18]

According to Althusser's view, the determining logic of this complex whole – i.e. the specific relationality of distinct instances – is itself *absent* or *lacking* from any positive presence in successive moments of time. It must be constructed through a separate

theoretical practice. This is what Rancière, too, set out to demonstrate in *Reading Capital* (1965), stating that in the mature Marx this approach comes to replace the framework of *The 1844 Manuscripts* still based on an ideological notion of the subject, and the givenness of all the levels of social formation for this subject and its continuous existence in time. In order to grasp the social formation, we need to think "the constitution of an objectivity which does not coincide with the development of a history".[19] This kind of objective determination, which conditions a given practice in a given present, yet is absent from it and graspable only through independent theoretical work, meant that it suited badly to a notion of self-authorised political actor. In the Althusserian model such an actor remained caught in the ideological givenness of time which necessarily misrepresented the state of affairs (by misrepresenting the nature of historical temporality itself as continuous). Theory as a practice which was independent from immediate political action had to be granted authority over the latter.

This notion of epistemological break provoked a different kind of break following the self-authorised revolts in May 1968 and the subsequent years. Along with his fellow-militants, Rancière came to question the privileged status of Marxist theory included in the Althusserian model and demanded that all 'knowledge' be returned to the turmoil of actual struggles and those engaged in them.[20] The main function of the Althusserian reading of Marx was now claimed to have been to establish and retain intellectual hierarchies by abstracting the knowledge that concerns socio-political processes from the immediate actuality of these processes. In Althusser, it was claimed, the actors never had sufficient knowledge of what they were acting upon or what principles should guide this action.

For political practice had a temporality distinguished from theory, and only the latter was able to determine the specific relations of politics to the multiplicity of practices which constituted a given social formation. The problem was thus that in Althusser the relations of different heterogeneous times – which constitute the specificity of each of them – is not accessible from a coeval positivity of the social reality and its struggles, but they had to be constructed by a separate theoretical practice.

In the post-May context, Rancière argued that what is specific in Marx is not a move to a new scientific terrain, able to produce adequate knowledge of society, but rather a switch to a '*strategic* position', in which the critique of ideas is referred back "to a social base that the revolutionary action must destroy".[21] Theory, or any discourse on politics, must be subjected to the social space-time where actual struggles take place, and where the stakes of every theoretical enouncement "are the stakes of power".[22] This means that there is no theory which is not *immediately* effective in a process of struggle serving a given power operative in it. In the Althusserian reading, however, any actual, or 'visible', present was but an absence of the rationality that determines it. As Althusser put it, "we must, of absolute necessity, pose the question of the mode of existence of *invisible* times, of the invisible rhythms and punctuations concealed beneath the surface of each visible time".[23] Countering his one-time teacher, Rancière was now demanding that any discourse, ideology, or 'theory' be directly linked to "the positivity borne by the manifest sense of a struggle".[24]

However, Rancière's famous 'break' with Althusser is not so much a break *with* Althusser than a break *within* Althusser. Namely, *Althusser's Lesson*

includes a certain rearticulation of the Althusserian reading of Marx. While Rancière attacks the Althusserian-Marxist idea of 'epistemological break' as well as Althusser's later self-critical phase, he is at the same time looking back at Althusser's essay 'On the Young Marx' and distinguishing this 1961 text from the later developments of Althusserianism. "At first", Rancière explains approvingly, "Althusser is still thinking within the categories of *The German Ideology*: the suppression of philosophy, the primacy of historical materialism and the opposition of historical reality to the illusions of ideologues".[25] In Rancière's words, Althusser's original plan was

> to draw attention to the actual terms of the debates that had given shape to Marx's thought, to the links between the transformations in his thought and political confrontations, to the effects his discourse produced on the labour movements and to the class struggles of his day.[26]

The crucial terms here are 'the actual' and 'of his day'. In order to subject 'theory' to class struggles, it was necessary to link its composition to the actuality of contemporary politics and the powers at work in it. But the Althusserian idea of heterogeneous temporalities, in rejecting any account of a transparent present, rendered such subjection impossible. The heterogeneity had in Rancière's view prevented "the actualization of Marxist philosophy in political practice" by dismantling the possibility to link a philosophical construction of the complexity of multiple times to "the set of operations of a power".[27] In order to allow a link between ideas and the actuality of power, they needed to be subjected to a given present. It was this earlier text by Althusser that Rancière now recalled in order to distinguish its framework from the directions Althusserianism had subsequently taken.

3. From Actualities of Power to Other Times

In 1975 Rancière founded the journal *Les Révoltes logiques*. It set out to study histories of revolt from a viewpoint, which allowed a link to the actuality of a given historical present, tracing "constant re-balancing of power above by power from below".[28] However, this broadly Foucauldian idea of historical study of the strategic function of discourses of revolt, referring back to their social base, soon started to appear problematic to Rancière. Reservations about an analytical framework, which "follows the displacement of power" in the discourses of revolt, in order to map out in each case how they reflect the pregiven positions in a struggle, are expressed clearly in the Editorial of issue 5 from 1977.[29] It was now seen to be based in "the vision of a social balance reproduced in the form of conflict" with no chance to envisage a radical transgression from such an equilibrium. This approach not only granted the intellectual sociological knowledge of a "conflictually self-managed universal harmony", but in so doing excluded any meaningful vision of emancipation from this 'social machine'.[30] It is at this point that yet another shift in Rancière's work emerges, which redefines his first break with Althusser.

There is no space here to follow closely Rancière's trajectory from the late 70s onwards, and I would only like to point out a few topics or aspects found here and there, which allow to trace further the discontinuous continuities that his works bear, not only with Althusser but also with Feuerbach and the very Marx whose Kantianism Rancière set out to criticise in 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest'. As we

have seen, Rancière's break with Althusserianism after 1968 rejected the detachment of theory from the social space-time of actual struggles, and demanded that theory be tied to powers operative in them. Starting from the late 70s, however, Rancière was looking for a way out from such a space-time, and he found it in a method not completely unlike Althusser's theoreticism. Not that Rancière would ever return to the orthodox Althusserian position, for the Maoist legacy of the refutation of intellectual hierarchies – and thus of the Althusserian division between science and ideology – would remain Rancière's absolute commitment. However, there is something of the Althusserian notion of theory as a sphere of intelligibility separated from the givenness of a social process, a sphere where such a process is rearticulated through a multiplicity of heterogeneous times, that returns in Rancière's work.

Indeed, Rancière has recently admitted his debt to Althusser in respect to "a certain idea of multiplicity of times".[31] In an Althusserian vein, the 'mature' Rancière holds that there is "difference of temporalities in one and the same present".[32] "There are several modes of present, several kinds of sensible presentation at one and the same time".[33] Like in Althusser, the differential relations of multiple times cannot be thought according to "the ideological obviousness of the continuity of time", because such a time has always already taken shape, predetermining the possibilities of acting in the present. As Althusser states, it "must be constructed".[34] Or, as Rancière puts it, every present "is required to compensate for the lack of its own time".[35] Such compensation amounts to constructing a configuration of times without being limited by any temporal form as its pregiven horizon, or "without a prejudgment concerning the specific configuration [...] which defines a time".[36] Rancière thus thinks in

terms of a certain detachment from a temporally determined historical present, in order to make room for a construction of such a present as a discontinuous and singular 'time'. In this way Rancière now wants to reject received constellations of power relations which would predetermine the directions of political action.

In Rancière's work this kind of configuration of different times often takes a form of anachronism or untimeliness. This means that actors in a given historical context make their actions resonate with an inactuality formed of rationalities, expressions, or perceptions borrowed from another time. A different time provides an absence brought into the midst of the present to reconstruct its positivity. One of Rancière's favourite examples of such an anachronistic mixture of times is Pierre-Simon Ballanche's rewriting of Livy's account of the plebeian secession from the city of Rome in 494 B.C., a kind of prototype of general strike. As Rancière writes in the preface to a recent edition of Ballanche's text,

> [o]ne apparently needed this detour via a reinvented Roman antiquity in order to meet the living experience [*le vif de l'expérience*] of the common people of 1830. One needed this radical inactuality [*inactualité*] in order to meet the inactuality which is at the core of any refusal of the 'natural' order of things, i.e. the natural order of domination.[37]

Hence, in order to render intelligible a practice of displacing an established state of affairs, a reference to the existing social context is not enough but one needs to rearticulate it in light of 'different times', to make absent times resonate in it. What is at stake is that one "requalifies one's situation with words borrowed from [...] other times" thus articulating a certain untimely coexistence of times.

This should be understood as a rethinking of the same theme in Althusser, where a given situation is not thought in light of its obvious givenness, but according to a "co-existence of a 'presence' and absences". In Althusser's science, such a co-existence "is simply the effect of the structure of the whole in its articulated decentricity. What is thus grasped as absences in a localized presence is precisely the non-localization of the structure of the whole".[38] To be sure, in Rancière it is no longer a question of a 'whole', the knowledge of which would offer a privileged scope to a given locality and allow articulating a truth invisible to those acting in this locality. Rather, as Rancière has explained, the method of his own research of workers' emancipation, it "could no longer be a discourse explaining [their] writings by locating them in the whole of the connections that made them possible. Instead, it had to start from the reality of their intellectual operations, reconfiguring a whole world of experience".[39] Here, the whole is then a creation of those involved in emancipatory practice, rather than the truth which determines it.

Althusser originally wanted to detach the historical logic according to which a social formation functions from the immediate givenness of social practices and reconstruct it in an independent theoretical practice in order to provide politics with a scope which was not readily subjected to the given. The problem within his view was that it did not allow seeing how such a construction could be articulated back into a social and political reality and the actualities of power operating in it. And despite Althusser's persistent critique of the abstract, his own notion of history seemed to lean on an "abstractly relational coexistence [which] takes it out of time altogether into the purely analytical space of synchrony".[40]

Now, in Rancière there is a comparable tendency toward abstraction from a given social space-time, but for him such abstraction is seen as an emancipatory gesture in itself. Hence, for Rancière the multi-temporal heterogeneity does not amount to *knowledge* of the functioning of a given social formation, but to transcending such formations by blurring the historical differentiations upon which they rest. It is aimed at manifesting a certain egalitarian coexistence as such. Hence, if Rancière is interested in ways of bringing together "heterogeneous temporal lines", it is because such a method "creates a transversal homogeneity in relation to [...] historical contextualisations".[41] In this sense, the coexistence of times is not meant to render intelligible the specific differentialities which keep the social formation at work, but rather to overcome or traverse any temporal differentiations that would determine the conditions in which people think and act. Through such a metamorphosis, the Althusserian theme of coexistence of multiple times shakes hand with an idea that constitutes another discontinuous continuity with Rancière's early theoretical context. What is at stake here is a certain idea borrowed from Ludwig Feuerbach.

4. Feuerbachian Space

As we have seen, Feuerbach appears in the early text by Rancière, published in this volume, just like he appears in Rancière's contribution to *Reading Capital* as well as in the writings of Althusser. In these texts, Feuerbach is seen in his usual role, i.e. as an early influence of Marx from which the latter takes distance and whose anthropology remains inferior to Marx's mature thought. For Althusser and the young Rancière, Feuerbach's anthropology, joining hands with Hegel, provided a certain teleological vision of history based on an original human essence. In *Althusser's Lesson*, however, Rancière revokes this teleological label attached to Feuerbach: "Feuerbach does not say that the essence of man is the origin of history. [...] Rather, [this essence] is defined in a relationship to nature which Feuerbach conceives [...] in terms of a spatial coexistence designed to be the very opposite of temporal exclusivity".[42] In the 1974 book, this reference is not meant to concede any fruitful role to the Feuerbachian atemporal space per se, but only to redefine the relation between Marx and Feuerbach in favour of a historical-materialist reading of Marx as opposed to the Althusserian notion of epistemological break. However, I argue that it is precisely this 'atemporal relation' thought by means of space which later comes to characterise Rancière's understanding of equality.[43] The spatial coexistence which brackets temporal differentiations provides the logical framework which is at work in the very idea of coexistence of multiple times. This can be seen, for example, in the way Rancière presents his argument on anachronisms in history.

Rancière refers to anachronistic temporality as a condition for historicity: "it is because of these switching points, these jumps and these connections that there exists a power to 'make' history. The multiplicity of temporal lines [...] included in the 'same' time is the condition of historical activity".[44] Anachronistic intertwining of times is then explained as the possibility of historical events. However, Rancière's real interest arguably lies less in historical eventalness than in a claim of equality, which requires a rejection of any *differentiation* of the possibilities of thought for people living in different times. It is presented against historians who think that people of the past "lived in another temporal universe, i.e. in another universe of thought" and introduce in this way inequality amongst thinking beings.[45] Hence, while at the first level the argument is meant to explain a certain evental differentiality in history, at the second level it is meant to ground equality or sameness; while the first level introduces heterogeneity, the second leans on homogeneity. And when it comes to this latter aspect, Rancière leans on a *spatial* metaphor, which is where we can locate Feuerbach's influence.

Through the spatial metaphor Rancière turns different times into different 'places' and conceives them as if they existed in the same sphere of co-existence. He performs this spatialisation of times often in reference to Plato, who in *Republic* argues that artisans are not able to participate in politics because they lack free time and must remain in their workplace. They "have no time to be elsewhere than the place [they] are geared for occupying —which means that [they] have no time to chat on the agora, make decisions in the assembly".[46] What is striking is that Rancière directly associates the question of transgression of the spatial order of the Platonic city with

a transgression of a temporal order of history. As a result, displacements between different times of history are presented as analogous with a movement in a homogeneous space, and the ever-present possibility of such a movement is transferred to time, a gesture which dismantles time as a principle of organised difference. Hence, through the method of anachronism, Rancière transfers to history that which "threatens the Platonic city", i.e. "the artisans who escape their condition, who want to occupy themselves with more than their 'own affairs'".[47] Rancière's historical studies of workers' emancipation applies such a method, refusing to employ "plots arranged in historical terms according to 'before' and 'after'" [*intrigues d'avant et après en termes historiques*].[48] His workers' discourses move across historical conditions, as if these were all equally present in space. This testifies to Rancière's formal understanding of democracy on the basis of an "empty and abstract space" or a "space made of disconnected places".[49] Thus, when he thinks a coexistence of multiple times, he thinks it through this kind of topographic sphere which is not readily linked to the concrete practices and the forms of thought through which the society is organised at a given historical point. Rather, it abstracts from such forms in order to bring different temporal-historical contexts to "a single topographic unity".[50]

As I stated above, this dismantling of temporal differentiations through spatiality bears a certain fidelity to Feuerbach, whom Rancière dissociates from Althusser's and his own early interpretation of this early influence of Marx. Rancière has recently acknowledged this himself. In reference to Feuerbach, he states that "[w]hat time classically denies is coexistence. Of course, space is supposed to be the form coexistence takes, and this means that in order to think of time

as coexistence, you have to in a way turn it into a metaphor, often through space".[51] For Feuerbach, temporality orders "various religions, philosophies, times, and peoples" according to difference, through "progressive series and stages", but space allows to think "the common, the equal, and the identical [*das Gemeinschaftliche, das Gleiche, das Identische*] in them".[52] What Feuerbach refers to with this common, equal and identical, is the human essence. Although Rancière would be wary of any positive representations of human essence or identity, with Joseph Jacotot he nevertheless wagers for a certain sameness between people as thinking beings: "The same intelligence is at work in all the acts of the human mind [*esprit*]".[53] Abstract spatiality, which allows a topographisation of historical time, provides him with a framework of intelligibility that enables his method to constitute a formal presentation of this equality. It allows him "to create a common *space* of thinking" amidst differences of historico-temporal contextualisations.[54]

The coexistence of times as a method of thinking history, inspired by Althusser, is thus associated with the Feuerbachian idea of human essence, thought by means of a spatial coexistence that transcends differentiations introduced by temporality. The specific merits of Rancière's thought are of course to be found in the way he manages to think both at once, i.e. to think simultaneously in terms of temporal differentiality and spatial coexistence which abstracts or brackets it. In Rancière's writings, the Feuerbachian space does not appear as a harmonious conviviality, but as a polemical logic posited against temporal differentiations of historical contexts and the possibilities of thought allegedly attached to them. It constitutes a certain kind of virtual coexistence, which short-circuits historical-temporal (as well as social) differentiations. If this

method combines the Althusserian idea of coexistence of times with the Feuerbachian notion of space as a form to think equality, it also allows Rancière's thought to figure as a certain kind of Kantianism. This leads us back to Rancière's early critique of Marx, discussed in the beginning of the present text, with which Rancière's later thought forms a specific kind of ruptu-

5. Kingdom of Ends

Let us thus come back to 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest'. As we saw in the first section, Rancière's reading of the young Marx was based on a Kantian antinomic dialectic between the universal (the law) and the particular (private interest). Such a dialectic was not able to think reality in historical terms, not able to understand its evolution, and it operated with what Rancière characterised as an 'ontological distinction' between its two terms, like the Kantian distinction between the rational and empirical determinations of the will. Hence, Marx failed to approach the difference between feudalism and the modern world historically, in terms of a temporal evolution. Basing his reasoning on a radical gap he was not capable of explaining the practice of the legislators, but he simply posited the universality of the law against this practice, and the true human world against a merely animal world.

Now, to situate Rancière's later position in relation to his early critique of Marx, we can state that he would no longer link specific forms of ideas and practices to specific times. He would no longer attach possibilities of thought-practice to historically situated social conditions. Rather, Rancière later himself approaches the Kantian position of the young Marx, as opposed to the historical-materialist standpoint from which he criticised Marx in 1963. Indeed, we find in Rancière's later discourse reasonings which clearly echo such Kantianism, and at times recognise it explicitly. Rancière not only criticises the democratic representative system in reference to the particularity of interests which are being represented in such a

system, but he always defines a true democratic capacity through the absence of any particular quality of those practicing it.[55] His formulation of 19th century workers' emancipatory practices in terms of a 'syllogism of equality' is likewise comparable to the way the young Marx shows the contradictions within the Assembly legislators' practice.[56] To borrow the words from Rancière's early critical characterisation of Marx, it is a question "of exposing the maxim of their action at the level of the universal", following the logic of Kant's categorical imperative. While in 1963 this constituted for Rancière the weakness of Marx's critique, he has later characterised the basic logic of his own thought in precisely these terms: the egalitarian maxim he follows "functions fundamentally in the same way as Kantian maxims, as a form of universalizing the very conditions of a practice".[57] For the mature Rancière, much like for the young Kantian Marx, it is more a question of "showing always and everywhere the gap" between the universalizing principle of equality and inegalitarian and particularistic logics, than of constituting any logic of historical evolution of the unity between the fact and the idea, or of *explaining* the emergence of the principle.[58]

Does this mean that Rancière simply adopts a position similar to that of the young Marx which he had criticised before? This is not the case. In Rancière's later thought, the gap between the fact and the universalist maxim is at the same time more and less radical than in Marx. It is less radical in that there is no ontological, or substantial distinction between the universal and the particular, as is the case in Marx. In the latter's debate on the thefts of wood, as the young Rancière argues, there is not only a formal distinction between the two principles but also a substantial distinction between contents to which these forms

belong. There is a contradiction between the reasoning according to private interests and "the human content, that is to say, the content of a human society in the age of Enlightenment and revolutions"; "there is a human form which corresponds to a human content, and an animal form which corresponds to an animal content".[59] Marx envisions a positivity, in the sense of the reality of a concrete social order, "the political society, which is a society governed by the principles of reason and humanity".[60] Hence, he sees the determination according to practical reason as a historically existing state of affairs, a form which produces its own social content.

As for Rancière, the universalising reason is a merely formal intervention. Hence, Rancière's Kantianism does not envisage an establishment of a state of affairs in accordance with universal equality. However, precisely for this reason, his position is more radically Kantian, and the gap between the empiricist reasoning and the universalising maxim is in principle even more antinomic. For Rancière, the practical reason remains precisely that, i.e. a *practical* intervention. It is more radical first of all because it does not claim a historical home. Although the young Rancière criticised Marx for not being able to present his critique in properly historical terms, in Marx the reign of reason was nevertheless seen as a historical stage, an 'epoch of general laws'. Hence, this non-historical vision of 'the political society', of the Kantian 'kingdom of ends', was still historically situated. For Rancière's own Kantianism, this is not the case. Its universalising function is a polemical form which is radically un-situated, precisely because it is presented by traversing all temporal differentiations. This transversal is formed through the topographical reasoning, which, as I

have showed above, links Rancière in a specific way to Althusser's as well as to Feuerbach's work. In this way, by means of its merely formal, topographical abstraction, Rancière's Kantianism manages to be at the same time historically more immanent. Because it operates *within* historically emerged content while not belonging to any *specific* historical context, it does not consent to compromising itself due to particular historical conditions. By the same token, i.e. through its topographic abstraction, it is placed in a radically different dimension than the one which obeys the laws of temporal succession. Like Kant's kingdom of ends, it operates in an *as if* mode amidst a temporally ordered universe: "as if we were all members of an already existing community".[61] The critical question of course concerns the extent to which such an 'as if' logic is able to support sufficiently concrete processes to allow actual transformations of social conditions. Furthermore, insofar as this logic is essentially articulated through a topographic abstraction, to what extent is it able to be combined with any real notion of processuality, which any consequential politics inevitably needs? A closer look at these questions needs to be left to another occasion.

1. I am grateful to Sezgin Boynik and Nicolas Schneider for their comments on this text.
2. See Jacques Rancière, 'The Concept of Critique and the Critique of Political Economy: From the *1844 Manuscripts* to *Capital*' [1965], in Louis Althusser et al., *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition*, trans. Ben Brewster and David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2015).
3. Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest', in this book, p. 12.
4. Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest', p. 18.
5. Ibid, p. 14.
6. Rancière, 'The Concept of Critique and the Critique of Political Economy: From the *1844 Manuscripts* to *Capital*', p. 77.
7. Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest', p. 10.
8. Louis Althusser, '"On the Young Marx": Theoretical Questions' [1961], in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005), p. 69.
9. Ibid., p. 44.
10. Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest', p. 14.
11. Rancière, 'The Concept of Critique and the Critique of Political Economy: From the *1844 Manuscripts* to *Capital*', p. 98, translation modified.
12. Ibid., p. 80.
13. Althusser, '"On the Young Marx": Theoretical Questions', p. 70.
14. Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest', p. 30.
15. Althusser, '"On the Young Marx": Theoretical Questions', pp. 62–63.
16. Ibid., p. 64.
17. Ibid., p. 70.
18. Althusser, 'The Object of *Capital*' [1965], in Althusser et al., *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition*, p. 246.
19. Rancière, 'The Concept of Critique and the Critique of Political Economy: From the *1844 Manuscripts* to *Capital*', p. 145.
20. In addition to Rancière's own *Althusser's Lesson* (trans. Emiliano Battista [London: Continuum, 2011 [1974]), the most remarkable post-May critique of Althusserianism is Guy Lardreau's *Le Singe d'or. Essai sur le concept d'étape du marxisme* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1973). Both Rancière and Lardreau belonged to the radical Maoist Gauche Prolétarienne (1968–1973), founded in the aftermath of May. While Lardreau's book forms a philosophical expression of the organisation's militant position, Rancière's work is already taking distance from it.
21. Rancière, 'Mode d'emploi pour une réédition de *Lire le Capital*'. *Les Temps modernes* 328 (November 1973), pp. 788–807, p. 791.
22. Ibid., p. 793.
23. Althusser, 'The Object of *Capital*', p. 248.
24. Rancière, *Althusser's Lesson*, p. 29.
25. Ibid., p. 29.
26. Ibid., p. 78.
27. Ibid., p. 28, translation modified, emphasis removed
28. Rancière, *The Intellectual and His Double: Staging the People*, vol. 2., trans. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2012), p. 118.
29. Editorial, *Les Révoltes logiques* 5 (Spring–Summer 1977), pp. 3–6, p. 6.
30. Ibid.
31. Rancière, *The Method of Equality*, trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), p. 47, translation modified.
32. Rancière, *Chronicles of Consensual Times*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 77.
33. Rancière, *The Method of Equality*, p. 148, translation modified.
34. Althusser, 'The Object of *Capital*', p. 250.
35. Rancière, 'After What?', in Eduardo Cadava et al. (eds.), *Who Comes After the Subject?* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 249.
36. Rancière, *Les Scènes du peuple. Les Révoltes logiques 1975–1985* (Lyon: Horlieu, 2003), p. 7.
37. Rancière, 'Préface', in Pierre-Simon Ballanche, *Première Sécession de la plèbe*, p. 22.
38. Althusser, 'The Object of *Capital*', p. 252.
39. Rancière, 'Un-What?', *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 49:4 (2016), pp. 589–606, p. 600, emphasis removed.
40. Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 28.
41. Rancière, *Dissenting Words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière*, trans. Emiliano Battista (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 199; Rancière, *The Method of Equality*, p. 67, translation modified.
42. Rancière, *Althusser's Lesson*, p. 6, emphasis removed.
43. Ibid.
44. Rancière, 'The Concept of Anachronism and the Historian's Truth'. *InPrint* 3:1 (2015), pp. 21–48, pp. 47–48.
45. Rancière, 'De la vérité des récits au partage des

âmes', *Critique* 769–770:6 (2011), pp. 474–484, p. 478.

46. Rancière and Axel Honneth, *Recognition and Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom, Equality, and Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 136.
47. Rancière, 'The Concept of Anachronism and the Historian's Truth', p. 39.
48. Rancière, *The Method of Equality*, p. 29, translation modified.
49. Rancière, *The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing*, trans. Charlotte Mandel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 104; Rancière, 'The Thinking of Dissensus', in Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (eds.), *Reading Rancière* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 6.
50. Rancière, *Dissenting Words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière*, p. 103.
51. Rancière, *The Method of Equality*, p. 58.
52. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings*, trans. Zawar Hanfi (London: Verso, 2012), p. 57, translation modified.
53. Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 16.
54. Rancière, *Dissenting Words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière*, p. 318, emphasis added.
55. Rancière, 'Des idées pour transformer une République encore oligarchique' [discussion with Pierre Rosanvallon], *Le Monde*, 6.5.2013.
56. See Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 45–58.
57. Rancière, *The Method of Equality*, p. 90, translation modified.
58. Rancière, 'The Dialectic of Reason and Private Interest', p. 19.
59. Ibid., p. 18.
60. Ibid, p. 27.
61. Rancière, *Dissenting Words: Interviews with Jacques Rancière*, p. 248; cf., Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4:438; see also Kant's analogous remarks on the idea of perpetual peace in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, p. 6:354.

Jacques Rancière
Marx in the Woods
The Dialectic of Reason and
Private Interest

Editor
Sezgin Boynik

Translation
Jussi Palmusaari

Foreword
Rab-Rab

Afterword
Jussi Palmusaari

Commentary
Ivana Momčilović

Proof Reading and Copy Editing
Mika Hayashi Ebbesen

Graphic Design
Ott Kagovere

Thank you
Gregoire Rousseau
Nicolas Schneider
Philippe Le Goff
Niall Kennedy

Printed in
Tallinn Book Printers

Paper
Munken Print White 100g
Invercote G 240g

Font
Century Schoolbook
L10

Rab-Rab Press
Nilsiänkatu 10A
Helsinki, Finland
www.rabrab.fi

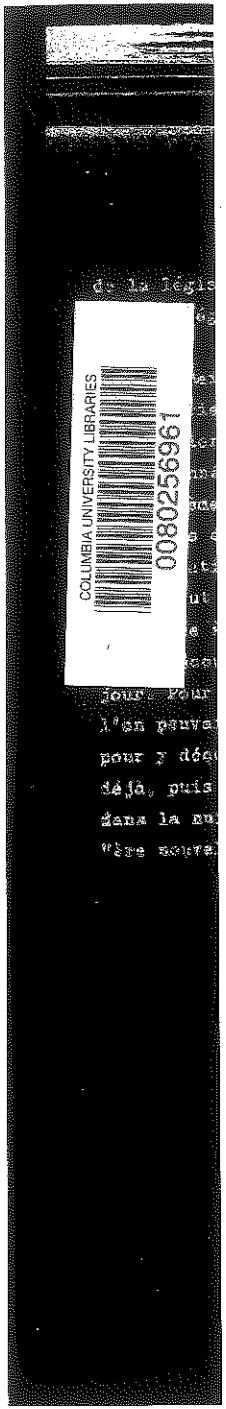
First edition
RAB12
600 copies
ISBN 978-952-94-1783-4
Published by Rab-Rab Press
April 2019, Helsinki

The images used in this book are taken from Turkish state television documentary made in winter 1975, showing peasants in the Kurdish region stealing wood from the forest. The idea to use these images are of artist Baran Caginli.

KONE FOUNDATION

frame contemporary art finland

We are grateful to Ivana Momčilović who has introduced this text of Jacques Rancière to us. Without her, this book would not exist. Also, we are grateful to Jacques Rancière who from the beginning supported this project.



of the third issue of *Rab-Rab Journal* that the forest we see has nothing to do with Heideggerian Geist, Kalevala myths, or Nordic purity. For us the forest is a network and composition of decrees, laws, rules, regulations, profits, constraints, and ideologies.

In trying to answer how "mysticism and pragmatism" join hands in the operations of private interest, Rancière's formalism, following Marx who writes that "the secret of nobility is zoology", delineates one particular characteristic, which he clarifies as a "reversal of natural animal kingdom into a spiritual animal kingdom". The political aim of this intervention was to show in which way the anachronistic and primitive conceptions of feudal society are still actual in the bourgeois times. Rancière complains that Marx did not consider the consequences of this conclusion, and instead saw it, again, as something historically and logically wrong.

This animalism is now, almost 180 years after Marx's text and almost sixty years after Rancière's commentary, once more on the ideological agenda. The elitism and sophistry of the so-called animal agency draws its inspiration from this understanding of spiritual-zoology lumping together the phenomenology of the body with transcendental identities. We believe, as Rancière writes, that "there is a *reason* for this unreason in reason"–it is directly linked with the private (capitalist) interest leaving no space other than the aggressive expropriation of the whole world. It seems to us that in today's world where humanity is reduced to bare-natural elements of survival, where millions of people's lives are threatened, and where any attempt to a dignified life is severely crushed, to seek the salvation in the spiritual kingdom of animals is a surrender of all positions.

We are presenting the first English translation of this text with the afterword of the translator, Jussi Palmusaari, who, with admirable clarity, delineates some complexities of Rancière's heretic logic and discusses the way Rancière subjects time (history) to a certain formalisation through spatiality.